

Michael F. Easley
Governor



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GOV. EASLEY MEETS WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY *Discusses State's Preparedness for Hurricane Season; Urges Citizens to Prepare*

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today met with Michael Chertoff, secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to discuss North Carolina's emergency preparedness for the hurricane season that began June 1. This is the second year in a row Easley and Chertoff have met to make certain that state and federal plans are well coordinated so that the response to any storm will be quick and effective.

"North Carolina's State Emergency Response Team and our local government partners are experienced and storm tested, and we have a good relationship with our federal partners," Easley said. "We plan, train and work together throughout the year to make sure we are prepared for any emergency. Now we need the citizens to do their part."

Easley proclaimed "Hurricane Preparedness Week" in May and urged all citizens to prepare for this year's predicted increase in storm activity by assembling disaster preparedness kits and updating emergency plans. Hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30, but the height of the season in North Carolina is usually from August through October.

A Mason-Dixon Poll conducted this spring indicated that most North Carolinians mistakenly do not believe they are at risk from a hurricane. In fact, North Carolina is the 2nd most hurricane prone state in the nation and all 100 counties have suffered hurricane damage during the past decade. According to the poll, 56 percent of those interviewed said they did not have a disaster plan and 68 percent said they did not have an emergency supply kit.

"People cannot wait until the wind is blowing and the water is rising to get supplies for their emergency kit and decide where their family is going to go to be safe," Easley said.

The Department of Crime Control and Public Safety has spearheaded a 30-minute television program airing this summer in English and Spanish on several stations across the state. Titled "Get Ready, North Carolina!" the program outlines some of the dangers from hurricanes and tells people what they need to do to prepare their families. The program was paid for with U.S. Homeland Security grant funds assigned to the N.C. Citizen Corps.